



A Brief Modern History of Reparations

Slides by Patrick Cloonan, University of Pittsburgh MAT program, 2022-2023



A Foreign Example: Germany

- Post-WWII Germany
- Paid hundreds of millions in dollars to Israel, holocaust survivors
 - Israel argued the cost of care and treatment of victims had been passed to them
- First modern example of reparations on behalf of a state
- “Learning from the Germans” by Susan Neiman



Indigenous American Peoples



- Indian Claims Commission- 1946
 - Awarded \$1.3 billion to 176 tribes and groups
 - About \$1,000 to anyone with indigenous ancestry
- Formal Apology- 2009
 - “many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States”
 - Contained within defense spending bill

Japanese Internment Camps

- 120,000 interned during WWII
- Civil Liberties Act of 1988
 - Issued \$20,000 check
 - Letter containing apology on behalf of the federal government
 - “Grave injustice”





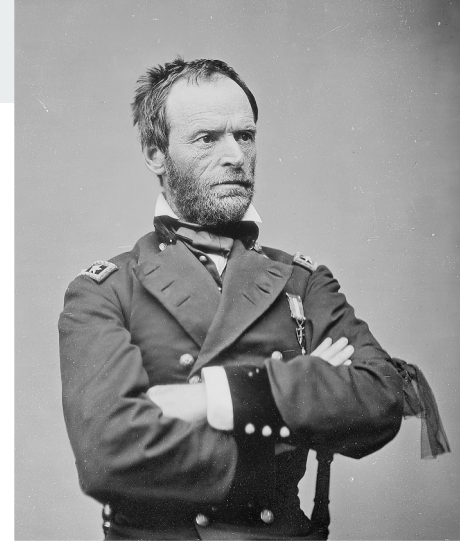
Native Hawaiians

- 1920 Hawaiian Homes Commission Act
 - Government would lease land to Hawaiians with 50% Hawaiian ancestry for 99 years at 1 dollar total
- Land mostly unusable
- Made Hawaiians fearful to marry other groups



Reparations for Enslavement

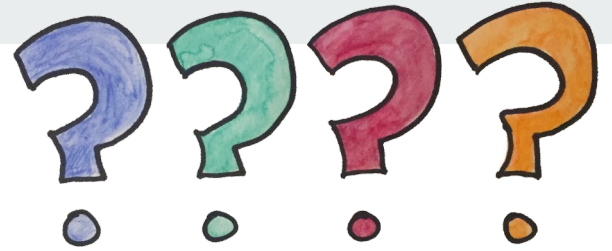
- Special Field Order No. 15- 1865
 - General Sherman, “40 Acres and a Mule”
 - Rescinded by President Johnson
- Southern Homestead Act- 1866
 - Freed persons could purchase land at lower rate for 6 months
 - Few could afford it, program failed





Reparations for Enslavement

- Apology issued in 2009 Concurrent House and Senate Resolution No. 26
 - 111th Congress, 1st Session
 - Apologized for enslavement, segregation
- Some reparations for discrimination, mistreatment of Black Americans at local and state level
 - Chicago, Florida



Endless Questions

- Who would reparations be given to? People who could prove an ancestry of enslavement or any person with black ancestry?
- Who should pay for these reparations? General tax funding?
- What should these reparations look like? Money? Preferential treatment? If so, how much?
- Would it ever be enough? Can anything the government does now truly result in justice?